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Preparation-Sermon FOR THE

COMMUNION.

1 Cor. 11. 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.*



T hath been so ordered in the good providence of God, that ye have lately heard of that main, very comprehensive and indispensibly necessary duty, called for from all that would worthily partake of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for which we are now making ready, *viz.* *Self-examination*; in reference to which, the apostle having perceived many faults and failings in these *Corinthians*; and much unsuitableness as to their communicating; gives advertisement, that whoever for the time to come would aright approach to the table of the Lord, *would examine themselves, and so eat*: And, knowing well that this is a difficult exercise, and that there is naturally a great deal of avernsness in peoples hearts from it, he judgeth it meet to press the exhortation to that necessary, tho' difficult duty, by a reason or motive set down in the words now read in your hearing; *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself*: As if he had said, You had need to look well to the examination of yourselves, for, if ye neglect or miscarry in that duty, your hazard and danger is dreadfully great through unworthy communicating; which if ye would escape, then make conscience narrowly and carefully to examine yourselves. The last words of the *verse* are a confirmation of the

the reason, and do shew why the Lord is so holily severe in punishing and plaguing those who approach to his table unworthily through not examining of themselves, because *they discern not the Lord's Body* : The force whereof is, that there is a most singular and gracious presence of the Lord Christ in the sacrament of his supper, and therefore the person who goes not aright about it, doth put a great disrespect upon, yea, doth even vilify him who is thus present in that ordinance.

It is the *first* part of these words, that at this time we would mainly speak to; wherein we would explicate the meaning of these *three*. 1st, *To eat and drink unworthily*, here, is to eat and drink unsuitably or unbecomingly; as the apostle, when he willeth the Christian Romans, Chap. 16. 2. to receive *Phebe as becometh* and is suitable to *saints*, he makes use of the word *worthily*, for so it is in the original; and this, being the opposite to that, is to be understood unsuitably and unbecomingly to such a manifestation of the love of Christ, in giving himself to and for his people: As in our common language, when a man does a thing unsuitably, we say he did it unworthily, when it answers not the end proposed. 2^{dly}, *Judgment, or Damnation*, here, takes in these *three* things. 1. A temporal stroke; as, v. 30, 31. *For this cause many among you are sickly and weak, and many sleep*. 2. It may look to eternal judgment; as damnation is often taken in scripture. 3. It may look to spiritual judgments; for tho' a believer be not capable of eternal judgment, yet by unworthy communicating he may draw upon himself temporal strokes and spiritual judgments; he may much wear out the life of grace, and bring himself under blasting and withering: And unbelievers draw upon themselves not only those, but eternal damnation, and that with a higher degree of aggravation. 3^{dly}, *That he is said to eat and drink this to himself*, as in the former verse a man is commanded to *examine herself*: It may take in these two, as aimed at by the apostle, 1. It is to provoke every man to his particular duty, from his particular hazard; he hazards his own soul. 2. 'Tis put here, to shew the restriction of the judgment according to the sin; and so, if a man examine himself, tho' others neglect it, the judgment

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ment shall not overtake him; but if he examine not himself, whoever escape judgment, he shall not escape it. And thus 'tis an encouragement to a man to go about the duty of self-examination, as well as a motive of terror: *Corinth* being corrupted with many abuses, one Person could not amend all: Well (says he) *Let a man examine himself*, and so he shall escape the hazard; if not, he will fall under it.

We shall first draw some *observations* from the words, and then speak a word for *use*.

First, It is supposed here, that in this ordinance of the Lord's Supper there is a special eminency, excellency, dignity and worth; or, this ordinance of the Lord's Supper is of a singular solemn nature: And this I gather partly from this *verse* considered in itself, *He that eats and drinks unworthily*, implies that there is a special worthiness in it, that a man should not offer indignity to; and partly from the connexion of this *verse* with the former, for it is made a reason why he presses particular and strict self-examination, which shews that there is a more singular excellency in this ordinance than in others; and partly from the context, for every circumstance speaks out a solemnity in this ordinance; as, (1.) The night when it was instituted, *v. 23. The same night in which he was betrayed*, and when he was taking his goodnight of his disciples. (2.) His jealousy of, and his quarrelling and threatening for the abuse of this ordinance, speaks out a special excellency in the ordinance, that all who approach thereunto should be suitably affected with. All the ordinances of the Lord are excellent; for if all his works be excellent, then much more the gospel-ordinances, as being a step above those; and yet this ordinance of the Lord's Supper seems dignified with an eminency and excellency above them all. 1. In reference to what it sets out and exhibites: They all set out love, but this sets out love in an eminent degree; for it sets forth the Lord's death, wherein the most eminent step and degree of his love shines; yea, this ordinance sets out his actual dying, and so sets out his love in its liveliest colours, and as the great masterpiece of it. 2. In respect of the excellent benefits communicated in it: It is true, there is no other thing on the

matter

matter communicate in it, than there is communicate in the word and baptism; yet, if we look to the words, *Take ye, eat ye, this is my body*, they hold out Christ Jesus not so much giving any particular gift, as actually conferring himself in his death and suffering: And the main scope being to confer Christ and all that is in him to the believer, it holds out some way the excellency of this ordinance beyond others. 3. In respect of the manner how our Lord Jesus makes over himself; whereby I mean not only the clearness of his making over himself, for in this ordinance there is the clearest view of a slain Saviour, and of covenanting with God; and often the most comfortable manifestations of love go alongst with it, for which cause 'tis called eminently *the communion*: But also that there is here a clear glance of heaven upon earth, Jesus Christ and his people mixing (to speak so) and being familiar together; he condescending not only to keep company with them, but to be their food and refreshment; and he giving them not only the word to their faith, but himself (as it were) to their sense, in so far as the mean whereby he communicateth himself is more sensible; it is by his Spirit that the mean is made effectual. And there is not only a fixedness of faith on our part, but a sort of divineness in the ordinance itself; the very first-fruits of heaven being communicate, as it were, to the very senses of the believer: *I say unto you* (says the Lord, *Mat. 26. 29.*) *I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom*: Where he seems to point out a more special way of keeping communion with his people in this ordinance, in resemblance to that which he will have with them in heaven; there being here a more special union and communion betwixt the head and members sealed up, a type of that which is to be in heaven, a taste whereof is sometimes given in this ordinance of the communion: Hence 'tis not only called *the communion*, as in the foregoing chapter, but *the communion of the body and blood of Christ*, and *the table of the Lord*.

The first *Use* of it serves to let us see how much we are obliged to Christ Jesus: What could he have given more than himself? And what mean could have been invented,

that could have more confirmed and warmed the hearts of his people than this, which is so lively a representation and commemoration of his blessed body? Very like we might come to discern his body better, if there were a more high estimation of this ordinance; not as if there were any efficacy in it of itself to communicate grace; yet, in respect of Christ's institution, 'tis a most lively mean of grace: And there is not a circumstance in all the action, but it is to be wondered at; as, that it was instituted the same night he was betrayed, and after the paschal supper, when the traitor *Judas* was going to bring the band of soldiers to take him; that he warrants us to take it, and that we have therein sweet communion amongst ourselves: Every thing in it ought to draw us to admire his sufferings, and the great love they came from, and the notable effects thereof to us.

The second *Use* serves to provoke us to study to be in a solemn divine heavenly frame for such a solemn divine heavenly action as this is, and thorowly to examine ourselves, and to see that all things be in good order; like to a bride that is to be married to-morrow, who will be trying on her marriage-clothes, and seeing that all things be right. I shall not descend to particulars, but, in *three* or *four* words in the general, only point at such a frame as we conceive is called for from you. 1. It should be such a frame as ye would desire to be in, if Christ were coming personally and visibly to marry you to-morrow: And O that this night might thus be a brydel or marriage-evening to us all! Consider what frame we would wish to be in, if we were to meet with him, and strike hands with him personally and visibly: Study and seek after such a frame. 2. It should be such a frame as we would desire to have, if we were going to give up the ghost, when all earthly things will be insignificant and of little worth to us; even such a frame as if our eternal peace and happiness were depending on that chock. This would be the night of making our testament (as it were) and of the adjusting our accounts with God, and of putting things to a point betwixt him and us; otherwise our debt may increase and grow greater, and it will not be so easy for us to win to a discharge of it. 3. It should

should be such a frame as we would desire to be found in, if the day of judgment were coming, and if that day were to be to-morrow: O how humble, how abstracted from the things of a present world, and how confirmed in the faith of God's love, would we study to be, if the voice of the arch-angel and of the last trumpet were sounding, and a solemn meeting of all before the tribunal of Christ were presently to be! What a frame (I say) would ye desire to be in, in such a case! Even such a frame should ye study to be in this night, as ye would desire to be found in, in that day: We fear it will be to many then a prick and a sting in their consciences within them, that they made so little conscience to be in a suitable frame for this so solemn an ordinance: The text tells that a sentence will pass on every one of you, and you would by all means labour to be in such a posture as the sentence may not be terrible to you. 4. It should be a heavenly and divine frame; for, if it be a heavenly and divine action, ye would consider what a frame it calleth for; how abstracted (as I just now said) the heart should be from the world, and from your carnal delights; how much in heaven, and conversant with God; what a pitch your communion with God should be raised to, in apprehending of, and meditating on him, in considering of, and admiring at the sufferings of Christ, and at the love they came from; tasting that he is good, and even delighting and solacing yourselves in his love; which is the Lord's allowance on his people, when the action is humbly and reverently gone about.

Secondly, observe, That tho' this be a most singularly solemn ordinance, and solemnly to be gone about, yet oft-times men and women go most unworthily about it, and abuse it. This is implied in the words, and we need not many proofs of it: If we will read from the 20 ver. to this, we will find it sufficiently proved; and if we look forward to ver. 30. & 31. we will find that many sad strokes came on these *Corinthians* for abusing and profaning this ordinance, and the apostle would have them gathering their unworthy communicating from these strokes. There is a readiness both in unbelievers and in believers themselves to miscarry in going about this ordinance; a readi-

ness in unbelievers; for as they spoil all things, all ordinances and duties they meddle with, *all things being unclean to the unbeliever*, so there is a miserable and woful necessity lying upon them to spoil this ordinance; and a readiness even in believers, who also may miscarry therein, as is implied in the last words of the chapter, compared with *ver. 32. When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* Some of them that were believers were chastised for this fault, to prevent their eternal ruin: And are there any acquainted with their own corrupt nature, but they may and will in some measure find in themselves an aptitude to miscarry, as in all other duties and ordinances, so in this? But the doctrine holds out a singular and peculiar bentness to miscarry in this duty and ordinance; so that one who will pray with advertency, and be carried fairly thorow in that and several other duties, may yet in this ordinance fall under the guilt of unworthy communicating: The reasons of it may be these, *First*, Because the more solemn the duty be, and the greater concurrence of duties be in it, there is the greater difficulty in going about it; for a soul cannot be right in this, except it be right in a number of other duties and graces, as in prayer, faith, love, and repentance: And that word, *Let a man examine himself*, takes in a complication of duties and graces; there would be a good state and a good frame, and graces would be in some vigour, and every duty suitable and proportionable to the nature of the action and of the day. And if it be a great and difficult work to carry rightly on an ordinary sabbath, or in prayer, or meditation, or other duties any day, what a difficult work must it needs be to have all these rightly yoked together? A *second* reason may be drawn not only from the complication of graces and duties, that is required in this action; but from the nature of the thing itself, that calls for duties in a high degree of spirituality: If any ordinance or duty call for a spiritual frame, 'tis this: It requires that the exercise of the judgment be most clear, that faith be most distinct, that meditation be most divine, &c. And the more spiritual the duty be, there is certainly the more aptness in us, thro' our corruption, to miscarry

in it. A *third* reason is, Because there is in men and women naturally and ordinarily but very little study and endeavour to know and take up aright the nature of this ordinance: There is in the most part a great ignorance of the strain and series of the gospel; but generally there is a greater ignorance, darkness and blindness as to the right partaking of this ordinance, than as to most others; either thro' the difficulty of it, or thro' our laziness that puts us not to study it better: So that if it were asked at many of us who may have some affection, What is a communion? and what is the right way of partaking of it? there would be found but very little distinctness in the thing, and many content themselves to live without clearness about it: And this makes people incapable to go about it aright. A *fourth* reason is from peoples lothness to bestir themselves in the work of preparation for it: There is some self-examination requisite for every duty, but there is a more solemn self-examination enjoined in reference to this; and how very reluctant are we to it? And seeing examination of ourselves is as the door and entry to this duty, is it any wonder that most persons communicate unworthily? this exercise of self-searching being so much slighted, which is to the most part so very difficult, and to many through their own fault impossible.

The *first Use* serves for warning as to this matter. It is easy to get a token and to come to the table, but it is not so easy to eat and drink *worthily*, not so easy to discern the *Lord's body*, and to get Christ himself in the ordinance; and, in a word, so to go about partaking of the Lord's supper, as ye may have solid quietness of mind in reflecting on it. Is it not a wonder, then, that the most part do so securely and in a manner even desperately rush upon it, who have it may be ten, some ten, some twenty, some thirty years without trouble under this guilt? We would think it a good piece of preparation, if ye were seriously afraid to become guilty of the *body and blood of the Lord*: Want of this holy fear breeds security, and keeps from stirring up to duty, and from reflecting on ourselves; whereas, if the heart were stirred and roused with such a fear, there would be greater and more seriously sharpened diligence in all these duties, whereof we heard from the

foregoing words, to which this is a strong and pressing motive.

The *second Use* serves for trial, who among the great company gathered together here this day are afraid of sinning against God, and taking his name in vain in so solemn an ordinance. Many think they are prepared, but we think not that person the better prepared, that is not afraid and holily jealous over himself: Wo, wo to many on account of the communion-days that are past and gone without fear: It were good that ye were afraid lest this day prove like many former days, and lest any of you come short of what hath been attained in former communion-days.

Thirdly, observe, That the sin of unworthy communicating is a wrath-provoking and a judgment-drawing-on-sin: *He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself.* There is hardly any sin that the Lord will more readily, speedily, and sadly plague and punish, than this: It is true, the Lord hath annexed that certification to the *third commandment*, that *He will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*; But is there any ordinance wherein the threatening is more expressed, and in reference to which the judgment hath been more severely and some way indifferently inflicted? as is clear, whether we read before or after the words of the text: And there is good reason for it; For, 1. If the duty be more solemn, if the presence in it be more gracious, and the bounty that flows in it be more abundant, then sure the sin of abusing, or of unbecoming going about it, must be the greater. 2. If we look to the sin not only in respect of its greatness in several other respects, but in respect of the nature of it, 'tis a more direct disrespect put upon, and despite done in some respect even unto Christ; 'tis to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; 'tis as if the spear had been in such a man's hand that pierced Christ's side, and as if he had driven by his own hand the nails thorow his hands and feet: The reason is, because Christ in this ordinance brings himself and his death so very near, that the sinner is put to it in a special manner, either to receive him, or to refuse and reject him; and when he refuses and rejects him, he thereby practically says, that he

he makes very little or no account of him at all, and that, if he had been living in those days when he was crucified, he would also have joined with the multitude, and cried, *Away with him*: Thus such an one *crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts him to an open shame*: O hainous and horrid guilt!

The *first Use* serves to alarm you, That, if the fear of sin will not prevail with you, the fear of judgment, of God's curse and wrath, and of the vengeance of the Mediator (represented in this ordinance very clearly, as crucified, and bleeding out his precious life for sinners) here, and eternally hereafter, may prevail with you to be serious in the work ye are now called to.

Let me (which is a *second* and more particular *Use* of the doctrine) advise you, as to examine yourselves seriously in reference to all your other ways, so to take a special look of your bygone communicating: O that many of you who are so whole at the heart, that there is no provoking nor awakning of you, and who are so senseless, that ye scare at nothing, could be prevailed with to charge yourselves with this horrid sin of being *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, that thereby ye may be awakened! It will certainly one day awake you; therefore, in your self-examination, take special notice: If ye have communicated unworthily, make special addresses to God for removing of this dreadful guilt, and have a special eye for the time to come that ye fall not in it; I say again, take a special review of your bygone carriage in this ordinance, and say to yourselves, Whether are we guilty of this sin? and whether are we in hazard to fall into it of new? And, to stir you up to this, consider, 1. What temporal strokes from God have come or may come for it: Who knows but our outward captivity, the blood that hath been shed, the many new and unheard-of, or but very little heard-of diseases that are among us, have in a great part been for this sin? 2. Know, that, beside temporal strokes on the outward man, ye may fall under spiritual plagues: The Lord may blast the ordinances for the time to come, that they shall do you no good; and he may blast any parts and gifts that ye have; he may make your ears dull of hearing, and your eyes blind, and

your hearts fat; And, if ye quench any convictions that ye may possibly be under for the time, it may be that ye shall never be privileged with such convictions again, nor be brought so near heaven hereafter; but more delusion and seduction by error, more prophanity, security, hypocrisy and presumption may break in among you; And tho' these be not thought much of now by some at least, but lookt at as very light things, yet the day will come when they will be found to be insupportably heavy; and men will be put rather to wish, that this house, wherein we now are, had fallen on them and bruised them, or that the sword had fallen in upon them and slain them, than to ly under such a weight. 1st. Know, that it may bring on eternal judgment; and O but this will draw deep on the score of many professors, even the abuse of the Lord's table, in partaking of his table, and of the table of devils! I shall name but a few sins here, that ye would notice and try yourselves in as to this: 1st, Ye have often communicate, have ye also often examined yourselves? Can many of you pitch on such an hour or half-hour, that ye set apart to try your soul's condition? 2^{dly}, I would ask, What repentance hath there been? Right examination makes discovery of guilt, and discovery of guilt brings out repentance, which hath some pricking and soul-panging with it. 3^{dly}, What effect hath followed? what engagements have been kept? how have many of us reformed our walk? is not our carriage as it was? passion and pride as quick and lively as they had wont to be? deadness, security and worldly-mindedness as they were before? Are we not as little self-denied, as unready to forgive, as ignorant, and having as little knowledge of gospel-mysteries as we were, and had many a year since? But very few can say on good grounds that they have made any progress in mortification and holiness; and, except it be some conviction, some flash of affection, or some faint resolutions to amend things amiss, what use hath been made of, or what benefit hath been reaped by many, and that not of the worst sort, by the communion? And therefore, in the next place, let me say, That it were not unbecoming or unsuitable to the communion, to make this night a night of humiliation before God, and

of prayer to him to be delivered from *blood-guiltiness*; there is not a more legible evidence of our unrenderness, than our being little pricked at the heart for this sin: A word of reflection from our neighbour, or the apprehension of some great man's displeasure and feud, hath lien nearer our hearts, than the wronging of the Son of God at this rate, hath done; for which it were good now to cast an eye to *look to him*, and to *mourn as one mourneth for his only son*, and to go to *Zion weeping as we go, asking the way thitherward*. These are no uncouth nor strange things, but such as are ordinarily prest upon us. We are afraid that many have lothed and left the simple way of godliness, to get and look after some shining and glistering thing to the eye; and that way will never profit them. Take a serious look of your soul's condition, and be in good earnest in the exercise of repentance, as the life of your preparation; even that ye may come, knowing well what ye need, and what ye are to receive if ye come aright.

The *third* and main *Use* is, That, seeing there is so great ground to fear communicating unworthily, and that so great judgments follow upon it, it would be, as our fear to communicate unworthily, so our uptaking business, how we may communicate worthily: This is the end of the day, and should be our task and work this night, even to endeavour to be worthy communicants to-morrow. Ye will readily ask, How is such a frame to be attained and come by? I would, for answer, desire you seriously to mind what ye have heard on these words, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat*; which comprehend the sum of what is called for from you: And we shall now add these *four* things, that, in your preparing yourselves to communicate rightly and worthily, ye would seriously mind; 1. A right up-taking of yourselves. 2. A right up-taking of the ordinance. 3. A right acting in reference to both. 4. A right manner of acting or a right frame in your going about the work. For the *First*, We say, There would be a right up-taking of ourselves, that we may know what we are, what are our sins, spiritual wants and necessities, that we may have some distinct errand to God: This is implied in these words, *Let a man examine himself*; that he may be well acquainted with

with himself. If there be not some time taken for attaining to a right consideration of ourselves, we cannot come rightly to this ordinance; or if any word come that suits our condition, 'it will come by guess as to us, and we may come to the communion, and neither know what we need, nor what we are seeking or would be at.

For the *Second*, we say, There would be a right uptaking of the ordinance itself, which, when wanting, it mars us, that we know not how to communicate: In the ordinance we would take up the substance of it, the end of it, and how it effectuates the end. *1st*, The substance of the ordinance is Christ Jesus himself, who, tho' he be not bodily, yet is he really present in the sacrament: His words are not empty words, the signs are not empty signs; but *the bread his body, and the wine is his blood*: For if there be a presence in the word, as he makes it known through his Spirit, by the efficacy of it on the heart; then, in a more special and solemn manner, there is a presence in the sacrament, which also he makes sensible to the spiritual senses of the believer. *2dly*, The end and use the ordinance, for which God hath appointed it, would also be rightly taken up; and this is large: It serves for the manifesting of his love in his death till he come again; and this would be a piece of your exercise, to discover the love of Christ in it, and to put your faith to exercise on that love: In which respect, Christians have not only their particular case to look to in the sacrament, but also that their spirits be taken up with the thoughts of the wonderfully condescending love of Christ, who hath given and left behind him a token and memorial of it. And especially these ends would be looked to and considered, *viz.* That 'tis given for instruction, for it gives us a sight of Christ crucified; it shews us the way of making up our union with him, and the necessity of it, and the warrant given us to make use of him. And as 'tis given for instruction and teaching, so for sealing and confirming; the Lord would have us thereby knowing the truth of his promises and covenant for our greater consolation, and that we may with the greater liberty apply them: Even as when a prince offers peace to a rebel, and grants him a pardon, to make him the more sure, and to remove all doubts

doubts and jealousies, there is a seal appended to the pardon, which confirms it, and consequently strengthneth the faith of the rebel to rest upon it; so this is a special end of the sacrament, to seal and confirm; God having graciously condescended to covenant and promise, and to swear to the truth of his covenant and promise, *that the heirs of promise may have strong consolation*; he also appends seals to his covenant. But, *3dly*, We are to consider how it effectuates these ends: And thus we are to look on the sacrament as exhibiting and applying Jesus Christ and his benefits; which must needs be a spiritual and sublime thing, holden out in these words, *Take ye, eat ye, this is my body*, &c. Where we have Jesus Christ giving over himself to the believer, so as he and the believer become one, and he hath Christ to feed upon. 'Tis true, there is no physical conjunction here: Yet as, in the word, the offer and promises convey Christ holden out in the promises to the soul, being received by faith, there is an union thus made up betwixt Christ and the person; so, in the right partaking of the sacrament, the Spirit going along with the word and seal, and the believer receiving the seal as given him of God for that end, as well as the word, there results an union and communion, a mystical and spiritual uniting and joining of Christ and the believer together; which, altho' it doth not always necessarily presuppose faith going before, yet it supposes faith necessarily to go along with it: And in this there is most express covenanting and bargaining betwixt Christ and the believer, Jesus Christ not giving himself here indefinitely, as he doth in the word and offer of the Gospel, but particularly; and thus the believer's faith hath the most distinct ground and reason to make application of him, and so the more distinct confirmation.

For the *Third*, There is a right acting in reference to both the former to be looked to.. *1st*, There is something that our judgment and memory would be taken up with, which is as the key to what follows: We are to remember the Lord's death, the end of it, the love he had in dying, and his instituting of this ordinance when he died for this end, that we might remember his death and love therein till he come again, and have our minds meditating on these.

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2dly, There would be the exercise of our graces, as of repentance, from reflecting on ourselves; of love, from looking to Christ, and of continued spiritual mourning, resulting from both: And especially there would be the exercise of faith, as being the main thing that on our part makes up the union, and whereby our communion is entertained. And there is a *threefold* act of faith called for in worthy communicating; 1. An act receiving. 2. An act giving. 3. A ratifying act, that knits both the acts together. (1.) I say, an act of faith receiving Christ's word and ordinance, and himself therein. (2.) An act of faith giving, resigning or committing ourselves to him: The covenant being in this respect mutual. And, (3.) A ratifying act, coupling or knitting these together, *viz.* Christ giving himself to us, and our giving ourselves to him; his engagement to us, and ours to him. To clear these a little further, 1. The receiving act of faith looks to the institution and covenant to which the sacrament is appended, and to Christ, in the words of institution and in the covenant, making offer of himself, which is to be considered as in the word and covenant, to which the sacrament is appended: And accordingly it welcometh him, as it doth in the word; for, as there is a receiving act of faith as to the word, so there is a receiving act of faith as to the sacrament: That is, when the soul is put to dispute, whether about the offer if it be made to it, or about the promise that supposes the condition, if it may lay hold upon it; the believing soul's taking of the sacrament is the permitting and allowing of itself to be confirmed, by virtue of Christ's appointing that ordinance for its confirmation, that the offer is made to it, and that the promise belongs to it in particular: As when a penitent sinner comes to the communion, and that promise rolls in his thoughts, *Thy sins and thy iniquities will I remember no more*, and he would fain believe it; the receiving act of faith is to take the sacrament as God's putting his seal to that word of promise, that he will make it good to the soul in particular, *Thy sins and thy iniquities will I remember no more*: Or when a soul hath its secret longing after Christ, and cannot dispense with the want of him, and cries out, *O! when wilt thou come unto me?* In the sacrament it looks on the insti-

institution, and takes it as a seal of confirmation to put it out of question, that he that hath promised to come, *will come, and will not tarry*; and it looks on Christ giving the communion, as if it saw him taking the pen, and with his own hand subscribing the contract, and lays it up in its heart as in a charter-chest, as an evidence and confirmation of its right to Christ. And indeed there is much need of being distinct in this; for there are many who make conscience of engaging to Christ in this ordinance, who look not on it as Christ's engaging to them; but the receiving act of faith looks on it immediately as his engaging to the soul: As a person that hath a hard heart, looking on that promise, *I will take away the stony heart, and give a heart of flesh*, and, expecting the making out of it, takes the sacrament as a seal that he will perform that promise, because he articles so with him to get that promise made good; even as a man, that would have some debateable clause in his right to such a piece of land cleared and put out of question, brings it to his superior to get it sealed off new: Now this receiving act of faith doth not only dispose and fit us to receive from God; but as the hand takes or receives the elements, so faith receives God's offer of the covenant, and that which is represented and sealed up in that ordinance. 2. The act of faith giving, is (as I said) that whereby we give ourselves away to Christ; and so, as we get one right, we give (as it were) another; or, as we take one hand, we give another: We receive Christ engaged to us according to the covenant, and we engage and give ourselves away to be his. Our very receiving supposeth our consenting, and faith's delivering and giving up itself or the person to Christ, and taking Christ to it, or to himself, so making (as it were) an exchange. (O wonderful exchange, by which we receive infinitely more and better than we give!) when the soul hath gotten him, it gives itself to him, to be changed and made better; and renews its purposes, resolutions and promises to that end, and takes the sacrament to make these sure and secure. 3. The ratifying act of faith is this, when we have taken Christ's promise by faith, and have given our promise to him, and surrendered and delivered up ourselves unto him, and we go about the communion, and exercise our faith

faith to get both confirmed; as we use to speak, *We will take our sacrament on it*; we take the communion to seal his part of the covenant to us, and to confirm ourselves as to the performance of that which we have engaged to him; and thus that which was before a bond on Christ's side, and a bond and engagement on our side, becomes now a mutual contract and bargain; both are put in one, and complicated together, sealed with one seal, and made use of for both these ends: The believer thinks himself surer of God's promise, and himself more securely engaged to God; and tho' this engaging hath no new promise with it, yet thereby the more explicitly is our duty brought forth, and the promise more particularly becomes ours.

As for the *Fourth* and last thing, It is a right manner of acting, or a right way and suitable frame in our going about this ordinance; which takes in several things, as, 1. Fear, because it is a very difficult thing rightly to communicate, and we had need to fear lest we mistake and miscarry. 2. Distinctness and clearness, which is a part of the result of self-examination: We would at least be so far clear in our condition, as to know and be convinced that the general strain of our way hath not been right as it should have been by very far, when we cannot so well find out and condescend upon the particular evils that we have been given to, or have done; and tho' we know not all nor many of the particular promises of the covenant, yet we would be clear in that general, that in the covenant God maketh over himself a God all-sufficient to the believer. 3. Faith in, and dependence on God for preparation, and for a suitable frame, for gaining new ground of corruptions, for more humility and tenderness, for more thorough turning to the Lord: *Convert me* (says *Ephraim*, Jer. 31.) *and I shall be converted*. There would be many serious and sincere-resolutions, engagements, and purposes, and much heart-melting, and prayer in the making of them; as it was with *Israel* and *Judab*, Jer. 50. 5. whose great desire and design was, to have the covenant betwixt God and them so secured, that it might hold perpetually, and never any more be forgotten; they desired to keep (as we use to speak) no hank in their own hand, they allow of no reservations or exceptions, and they go about this great

great work praying and weeping : This were a sweet and suitable frame for a communion, and notably well becoming a people that approach to the Lord's table ; and we seriously commend it to you, and you to the grace of God in the practice of these things, which his own blessed self make forthcoming to you.

A Preparation-Sermon for the Communion,

On 1 Cor. 11. 29. *Not discerning the Lord's Body.*

IT is a very great and grave, a very momentuous and concerning work, rightly to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper; it hath as many and great advantages attending the due and worthy participation thereof, and as many sad consequences following the unworthy participation of it, as any other of all the ordinances of Christ hath : And therefore, when the apostle hath sharply expostulated with the Christian *Corinthians* for several abuses in reference to this ordinance, he proceeds, after a full declaration of its institution, to guard them against all after-abuse thereof, and to fit and prepare them for suitable and worthy communicating ; and the *first* direction that he gives them is in reference to the preceeding preparation, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat* ; The *second* is in reference to the action itself, teaching them to communicate worthily, so as they may *discern the Lord's Body*, by holding out the danger of unworthy communicating : Both which he knits together, telling them, that if any of these things be wanting, it will bring on judgment. Whence in a word, and but in passing, we may observe these two things. 1. That a man will never communicate worthily, that doth not beforehand endeavour to prepare himself for it ; and therefore he prefixeth this, *Let a man examine himself*, and then subjoins, *And so let him eat*. 2. That a man that is not distinct in discerning himself in some measure after the examination of himself, will never aright discern the Lord's Body in this ordi-

ordinance of the communion: He that takes not up himself, will never take up Christ rightly.

In the words more particularly we have *three* great things in reference to present communicating; The *first* whereof is, the great and peculiar use of the communion, and that is, that it makes the Lord's body discernible, it puts Christ in a capacity (to speak so) to be taken up and discerned; The *second* is, the great duty of a worthy communicant, and that is, rightly to discern the Lord's Body, so holden forth; The *third* is, the great sin that unworthy communicants fall into, and that is, *They do not discern the Lord's Body*, but are like so many dogs and swine, who not knowing what delicacies are there, they go about the action, not knowing what they are doing.

The *First* is clear, *That, in the Sacrament, Christ Jesus his broken Body is made discernible to us; else he would not find fault with them who come, and do not discern it.* The words also before, v. 24. clear it; *This (saith he) is my Body which is broken for you; So Chap. 10. v. 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?* And the sharp judgments that come on people for not discerning the *Lord's Body*, and so for being guilty of communicating unworthily, do shew, that not only is our Lord's Body really present, but in a special manner discernible in this ordinance.

To clear this a little further, we shall, 1. Premise a *twofold* distinction; and then, 2. Answer a few questions that serve for clearing the doctrine, and for better uptaking of this ordinance.

First then, We would *distinguish* betwixt these two, *viz.* Looking on the sacrament as strictly taken, and as contradistinguished from the word; and looking on it as more complexly taken, as including the word. It is in the last sense that we consider the sacrament here, *viz.* as taking in, 1. Christ, signified and represented by the elements. 2. The word and covenant, to which the sacrament as a seal is appended; therefore the cup is called, *The cup of the New Testament.* 3. The seal of the sacrament itself, appended to the word and covenant.

2. We

2. We would *distinguish* betwixt Christ's broken Body considered as discernible to our understanding only, and the same considered as it is discernible to our very senses, or as it is apprehensible, when by feeling we may grip it as it were, and not only look to it, but take hold of it : (how this is, shall be more particularly explained and cleared afterward, for preventing of mistakes) It is in this last sense that we understand *discernible* here, not excluding the former ; so that Christ's broken Body in the sacrament is not only made discernible to the understanding of the right communicant, but he is made communicable and apprehensible, and there is an union with him attainable in that ordinance : And what we said before proves this ; he holds out his Body to be received, and he is received in it.

As for the *Second*, to wit, the *questions* to be answered ; they are these *Four*. 1. In what respect is Christ present and discernible in the sacrament ? 2. To what is he made discernible and communicable ? 3. How the sacrament makes him discernible, and what way it holds him out as discernible to us ? 4. What may be the reasons why Christ holds out himself, his broken Body, as discernible to us in the sacrament ?

1st, then, In what respect is Christ present and discernible in the sacrament ? We answer, 1. Not simply considered as he is the Son of God, nor in respect of any benefit from him as Mediator, neither simply as Redeemer ; but he is holden out as incarnate ; and so this sacrament differs from the *Jews Passover*, which held him out as to come, while this holds him out as come. 2. It holds him out, not only as become Man, but as suffering, as having his Body broken. 2. He is made discernible in respect of the end for which he suffered, and had his Body broken, and his Blood shed : *This is* (saith he) *my Body which is broken for you ; this cup is the new testament in my Blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many*, to wit, of all the elect : It holds out Christ Mediator, God-Man suffering for us. 4. It holds him out as communicable, and in capacity to be participate of by us ; therefore 'tis called the *communion of his Body*, Chap. 10. 16. to tell us, that we may be united to him, and made to share of him ;

and

and we are bidden *take and eat, and all to drink* of it. These last *two* look to the covenant, and hold out the sacrament in reference to it, and how our Lord Jesus, first by his sufferings was to purchase a people to himself, and secondly that he was to be communicable to his people; therefore *the cup* is called *the new covenant in his blood*: The cup and covenant go together; for tho' we may consider Christ without the sacrament, yet we cannot so well consider the sacrament without Christ and the covenant.

2dly, To what is Christ made discernible and communicable? We answer, 1. He is not discernible nor present after a corporal manner to the bodily eye, tho' he be really and truly present: The bread that he gives is his body, and the cup his blood; and yet it was bread and wine which was given, and not his body and blood corporally. 2. He is not present and communicable by any local mutation, by taking us up to heaven to him, or by bringing his body out of heaven to us; but he is these *three* ways present and communicable. (1.) To our spiritual senses, to an enlightened understanding, which considers Christ's body broken, and his blood shed. (2.) To the faith of his people he is present in his own ordinance: When his Spirit goes along, and quickens their hearts, and their faith is in exercise, they are made to apprehend Christ's body, and to have an union with him sitting in glory, as really as they partake of the elements with their hand, and feed upon them with their mouth and stomach; an union as real as is betwixt the head and the members, and betwixt the root and the branches: These two, the *Spirit* on Christ's side, and *Faith* on our side, make up a real union; and therefore, tho' this presence be real, yet 'tis spiritual: Faith, looking and going thorow the elements, takes up Christ according to the end appointed, and this makes the union: Even as faith will look and go thorow the word, and, crediting the word, takes up Christ in it, and makes an union with him; so, by vertue of this ordinance, there is a spiritual presence of and union with Christ Jesus. (3.) A presence to sense, not so much in respect of inward feeling, as in respect of the powerful effects of his presence, tho' often inward feeling goes alongst with it; and therefore 'tis called the *communion of his body*, and the *wine*

wine of heaven: And in respect of the mean and way he manifests himself therein, to the eye, to the touch, to the taste, and to the ear; and there is a colour sensible: Which is more than is in any other ordinance, where there is but the exercise of one sense; for, the more of the outward senses he makes use of, he brings with him a proportionable blessing to the inward senses of the soul.

3dly, How doth the sacrament hold out Christ as discernible to us? For answer, I shall offer these *Four* ways, how he may be present to the faith of the believer, in the sacrament; all which ways he is made discernible: 1. In respect of the institution; for Christ is here represented by the minister as giving himself; his authority and warrant is here, therefore himself is here: This, tho' it be common to all Christ's ordinances, yet it belongs in a peculiar way to this ordinance; for in it he is present in a special manner, making over himself and his sufferings to us. 2. He is made discernible in the sacrament, in as far as it represents him: And tho' the word hold him out, yet the sacrament doth so, more fully, clearly and sensibly, by such and such signs; by bread, and bread broken, representing his body broken by suffering; by wine, and wine poured out, representing his blood shed; and by wine distinct from the bread, to shew a most true and real death: In which respect, 'tis said, *Do this in remembrance of me*; and, *As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye shew forth the Lord's death till he come again*. Every sacrament represents Christ, but this represents him in his suffering and dying, and in the end of it, and makes it over to the worthy communicant. 3. He is made discernible by this sacrament, in this respect, as 'tis a seal appended and affixed to the covenant, serving to ratify and confirm the promises contained in the covenant; and so the bread and wine, considered in reference to the institution, are a real confirmation of our real partaking of the thing signified, and in some respect make Christ really present: As the giving of a sealed charter of a house to a man, is the giving him the house; or, as the giving of infeftment by a bit of earth or stone (being a legal confirmation) is the giving of that land to the man, wherein he is infeft; because (as I said) 'tis a legal right

to it, and makes it present and discernible to him: Even so, Christ is made discernible in this ordinance, because we have our right to him, which is in the word, in a special manner confirmed to us in it; for not only doth this (as other sacraments do) confirm the word and covenant in general, but it hath this peculiar to it, that it confirms Christ's making over his dying self to us. 4. Christ is here present and discernible, and made so by this ordinance, if we consider the sacrament as a mean whereby we have Christ communicate to us: He not only makes over himself covenant-wise, but sealeth this gift; and the sacrament is a mean of communion with him thus made over to us: In which respect, the believer doth and may warrantably make use of the sacrament for his quickning, elevating, and strengthening to cleave closer, and to grip faster to Christ; for which cause, 'tis called the *communion of his body*, and hereby we are said to be made *one body with him*: Not but that without the sacrament it may be and is often so; but by the sacrament this union and communion is strengthened and furthered to the faith and spiritual sense of the believer.

4thly, What are the reasons why Christ will have his broken body made thus discernible and apprehensible in this sacrament? We answer, That he will have it so, for these reasons, 1. For evidencing of, and bearing testimony to, his great love to his people: It says that a dying Christ so loves us, that he gave himself to us; and so the memory of his death is revived and kept up: He will have his dying Self in a sacrament bestowed on his people, to keep his love still fresh to them in their remembrance. 2. For the publick professing and testifying our faith in a dying Saviour: For in this sacrament we profess our faith in him, and dependence on him; and we say thereby, and declare to the world, This my Saviour died, and is able to give me life; which is a piece of honour and glory to the Mediator, and a part of our duty, when we give publick testimony, that we think no shame of a crucified Redeemer. 3. The Lord hath, for the edification and benefit of his people, made himself so discernible in this sacrament; and there is a *fourfold* edification or benefit that redounds to them by it. (1.) Instruction; so that they cannot

cannot so well take up the Lord in the word, may be somewhat helped to take him up in the sacrament as a slain Saviour, and as being as needful as meat and drink, without which, as we cannot live, no more can we live without him; And O how many spiritual lessons may be had by these significant ceremonies instituted by Christ!

(2) There is here edification unto the faith of God's people: And thus it becomes strengthening, when not only Christ says in his word, *I have loved my Church, and given myself for her*, and, *They that believe shall not perish*; but we have this ordinance sealing this. 'Tis exceeding strengthening to a poor weak doubting body, which could not easily believe that Christ would be so kind to a rebel; when he gets a sacred seal of his kindness, it helps to believe what is promised. 3. It edifies, as it serveth to promote the inward growth of grace: For, in the sacrament, Christ is communicate; and, as he is communicate, life is communicate, love to God, and to one another, is communicate: And, in a word, we cannot imagine a communication of Christ, but it brings with it strengthening to the inward man. 4. There is edification in respect of the believer's consolation, whether as to his sense, or as to his faith: The gospel in its offer and promises comes out, and says, Men and women, be it known to you, that Christ is preached to you, and remission of sins thorow him; but the sacrament says, Believing man and woman, there is my body not only broken for all the elect in general, but for thee in particular: And this much silenceth the great debate whether I be elected or not, or within the covenant, or not; for it says, O man, here is a slain and broken Redeemer made over unto thee, upon condition that thou close with him in the covenant, as he offers himself: and so, when there has been some wavering and fainting in respect of consolation before, it proves very strengthening of the believer's consolation, considering the nature of the ordinance; and, in this respect, the sacrament is as a love-token of a kind husband to his spouse, who, when he is to remove to some considerable distance from her for a time, says, Take and keep this in remembrance of me, and think that I dearly love thee, and will not forget thee, till we meet again,

The *second* point of doctrine is the great duty called for from a worthy communicant; and that in short is, *rightly to discern the Lord's body made so discernible, and as he is made discernible.* The text confirms the doctrine: For, tho' a man had never so many good things; suppose that he had not only gifts, but grace, yea and a holy frame of spirit; yet, if he be ignorant of what he is called to or a-doing in this ordinance, he cannot discern the Lord's body, and so cannot communicate worthily: Hence it is, that there is so much need of knowledge, without which a man can no more than a child or a fool rightly take up Christ in the sacrament.

To open this a little, we shall speak a word to these three, 1. To the Object to be discerned. 2. To the act of discerning. 3. To the reasons why this discerning is so necessary a duty.

1st, For the *Object to be discerned*; it is Christ Jesus suffering, dying, and making over himself to his people according to his covenant; 'tis Christ, and yet Christ dying, and Christ dying according to the covenant, from which he can never be separated: And especially in this ordinance in particular, considered with its end and institution with respect to the covenant, 'tis Christ giving himself, and in this sacrament, according to the covenant.

2dly, For the *act of discerning*; it is taken *four* ways, the last whereof is the main. 1. To discern a thing, in scripture, is to have distinct thoughts and apprehensions concerning it; 'tis to take up a thing simply and as it is in itself: Thus, to discern Christ present in the sacrament, is to discern how and wherefore he is present. 2. To discern a thing, is to difference it from other things; and, in this respect, a thing is said to be discerned comparatively, as 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ from another?* Thus, to discern this sacrament, and Christ in it, is to difference it from other things; considering that it was once common bread and wine, but that now it is not so: It is to put a difference betwixt the sacrament and common bread and wine; and betwixt the sacrament and the word and covenant, yet with respect to the covenant, as the seals differ from the charter; and to difference this sacrament from other sacraments, in respect that it looks

to a dying Saviour, and communicates him and his benefits that way. 3. To discern a thing, is to have a high esteem of it; such as was the discerning of *meats, days, and places*: So to discern Christ in this ordinance, is to have a deep impression and high estimation of Jesus Christ, of his death, and of his matchless love shining therein; to have much spirituality, holy fear, awe and reverence in reference to him: Such a fear and reverence as mean men will have before a king or a great man, who when they carry not suitably before such a great person, we will say to them, Know ye where you are? So the right discerning and uptaking of Christ here, is to have a high estimation of him. 4. There is a complex discerning of a thing in reference to its use and end: Or we may call it a *relative* discerning, which is practical, when a man conforms himself suitably to his discerning of the thing; the want whereof our Lord reproves in the *Jews, Hypocrites* (says he) *ye can discern the face of the sky, but ye cannot discern the signs of the times*: And, in this respect also, when a man carries unsuitably before a magistrate, 'tis said to him by discerning persons, Know ye where you are? And, this being the main thing here implied, we shall speak a little more to it, wherein these *two* things are supposed; (1.) Some distinct uptaking of ourselves, of our need, and of our hazard. (2.) The right uptaking of Christ in this ordinance, as to the supply of those necessities, and preventing of that hazard. And this *doctrinal* discerning goeth before that which is *practical*, which is a man's suitable use-making of Christ, or suitably exercising himself in reference to his need, and that ordinance appointed for supply of his need by Jesus Christ; which is with a reflex look, sometimes on himself, sometimes on Christ. And there are in this these *five* steps, which follow one of them upon another. 1. It consists in a suitable frame of heart, as becomes such a poor, sinful, unworthy and needy person in the presence of so holy a Lord, going about such a holy action; another frame than is called for at our dinner or supper, or at ordinary hearing the word, or at prayer; A holy, humble, cheerful, serious, heavenly and hungry frame: Holy awe and respect to God, making humble; faith of God's goodness and rich grace

in Christ shining in this ordinance, making cheerful; the conviction of need, making sober, and yet very serious and eager in what he is about. 'Tis a frame made up, as it were, of contrarieties; ardent love and zeal, and yet a calm and composed spirit to hear what God says, to take what he gives, and to behold what he manifests. 2. It consists in an exercise of the mind in meditation, both in reference to ourselves and to Christ: Meditation in reference to our own sinfulness and misery, and meditation on Christ's love, calling to mind all that he hath done, thinking with delight on Christ's suffering, and on the end of it; and again reflecting a look on ourselves, to keep life in this meditation, What was I when he suffered and did all this for me? and what am I now, when he is offering this to me? To have the picture of a loving husband hanging by a wife, to what purpose is it, and for what use doth it serve, if she never look on it to mind him whom it represents? 3. It consists in an exercise of graces, 'tis even (as it is said in the *Song*) a making of all the *spices* to *cast forth their smell*; and the putting of all things in good order, and studying to have them in good case: 'Tis to have love warm to the Giver, and closing with the gift of a dying Saviour; and to have love warm to others of his people for his sake, and because he hath taken us in with others, to partake of the benefits of his love shining in his death: For love to the Head and members go together. 'Tis to have repentance lively stirred up, and sin made heart-pricking, and godly sorrow to flow; the heart made to lothe sin, and the mind exercised in forming hearty resolutions, purposes, vows and engagements against it. But 'tis especially to have faith stirred up and in exercise, and to have all the senses of faith (to speak so) set agoing: As, when the word comes out, and says *Take ye, eat ye, this is my Body which is broken for you*; faith beholds and gets as clear and satisfying a view of Christ's suffering and dying, as if the man saw him with his bodily eyes: When the hand is stretched out to take, faith acts proportionably, in stretching out its hand to take Christ; and not only grips him, but in this ordinance, and according to the end of it, takes it as a pledge of Christ performing what he hath promised, making use of him for the end appointed.

pointed : When the eye looks on what is done, faith is considering and taking a view of Christ, and of the covenant, and of the benefits purchased by him ; and sees another thing than the elements, even the wakned-up sword of the Father's justice pursuing the Mediator, as the elects Cautioner : When the eye looks on the distribution, faith sees Christ made as it were believers Common-good given among them, and so every one of them : When the hand puts the bread and wine to the mouth, faith hath a way of opening its mouth, and (as it were) chewing and feeding upon Jesus Christ, and of strengthening, refreshing, and cheering itself in him ; counting itself well come to with him, and secure in him ; and fastning its engagements to him : All which strengthen our spiritual life, as eating and drinking doth the natural life. And then, when it comes to the taste, Christ relisheth most sweetly to the believer, so that no wine doth cheer the natural heart so much as Christ in the sacrament, considered in his love and covenant, and in the benefits that come by him, does the soul of the believer ; faith here considers Christ not only as communicable, but as actually communicated. The *fourth* thing wherein this discerning consists, is a reflecting exercise : When we have received the sacrament, we are to reflect and consider what we have done, and what we are doing ; Are we indeed feeding upon Christ ? What is this in our hands ? This bread in some respect is not bread, but Christ ; This cup is not wine, but *the cup of the new testament in his blood* ; And, by this reflex act, the believer applies, and confirms himself ; having received the sacrament, whereby his union with Christ is signified and sealed up, he applies, and says within himself, Now Christ is mine, and I am his : And he confirms himself in Christ's love to himself, and in his interest in him ; Now, saith he, I have gotten no delusion, but the sign and seal of his blessed body broken, and of his blood shed for me. If unbelief say, Have ye gotten Christ indeed ? Yes, says the believer's faith, having received this pledge of his love, I have gotten himself, and I should believe it : And this is to act on Christ, not only directly, which is a thing common to the sacrament with the word ; but to act on Christ

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reflexly, and to perswade ourselves of our union and communion with him, which is the end of this ordinance; else we take not up Christ as giving a seal: Therefore the word is, *Take, eat, this is my body broken for you*; there is more than a bare sign here: And faith acts, not only for receiving, but for confirming itself, that by receiving it hath an union and communion with him, who is holden out in the sacrament; for, if it be a seal, and exhibit Christ as a seal, then faith should receive and act on it as such, for attaining the end that a seal should have, supposing the condition to preceed. 5. It consists in an act of spiritual affecting, when there is a holy smacking (to speak so) and kissing of Christ, the soul digesting him for the life of the inner-man, and thereon delighting, rejoicing, and exulting in him: And so the faith, confidence and hope of the believer are strengthened; which makes him that he is not ashamed, and upon the back of this ordinarily the love of God is shed abroad in the heart: And tho' there should be little sensible feeling, yet the believer finds himself obliged to cheer himself in Christ, and in the covenant, and in the benefits that he hath thro' his purchase; and there is readily some warming of love to Christ, and he is confirmed in the faith of the love of Christ to him: And it is impossible, where these two are, but some holy tickling of affections, which flow from the word, and from this ordinance thus rightly gone about (as has been said) will follow; and if this be not, that is, if Christ be not thus discerned in the sacrament, (1.) God gets not what he calls for, Christ's death is not rightly minded, his glory and our edification are not promoted: Nor, 2. Is the end of the sacrament attained: Neither, 3. Is our comfort furthered: For it is not the ordinance barely, or ordinary bread and wine set apart for a holy use, but Jesus Christ discerned and received in the ordinance, that comforts; otherwise, the ordinance in and by itself will not promote our comfort and growth.

The *third* doctrine is, *That it is, tho' a very common and wise, yet a very great sin, not to discern the Lord's body as he is holden out in this sacrament discernible.* The greatness of which may be easily gathered from what we have discoursed concerning the great privilege of the discernibleness

ness of the Lord's body therein; from the horridness of the guilt that it involves in, even *the guilt of the body and blood of the Lord*, the greatest and most horrid of all blood-guiltiness; and from the dreadful judgments and plagues that follow on it, temporal or bodily, and spiritual plagues, yea, even eternal damnation, if repentance through grace prevent not. But we must, because of the shortness of time, leave all that might be spoken in the more particular prosecution of this doctrine; and shall only give you *two or three* caveats (wherewith I shall close) to guard against mistakes in reference to what hath been spoken. I know it will readily be said, If this be discerning of the Lord's body, and if none other do discern it but such as go about these things, it will be hard for any to discern it. For answer to this, I would have you to consider, 1. That there is a more explicite, distinct and perfect discerning; and a more implicate, confused and indistinct discerning of the Lord's body: If we speak of perfection in discerning, who come up to that? but if we speak of an honest sincere way of aiming to discern, tho' it be somewhat indistinct and confused, that may be won at; yea, I would not think them in a good condition that rest satisfied with themselves, as being distinct enough in all these things whereof we have spoken: Yet, where there is (as I just now said) honest aiming at these things, tho' in a confused and indistinct way; where faith and love are in some measure acting, with a sort of fear and joy mixed together; when there is a fear to profane the ordinance, and yet the soul loves it so well, that it cannot endure to want it, nor Christ in it; there is a discerning of the Lord's body, that warrants to draw near. 2. Consider, that there is a general confusion, and a particular confusion (to speak so) in going about this ordinance: The general confusion is this, when persons are so very ignorant and confused, that they know not at all what they are doing; a particular confusion is only in some respect, that is, when a soul knoweth that Jesus Christ is in the ordinance, and knoweth its own condition to stand in need of him; that it hath many spiritual wants to be supplied, and that there is much good and a supply of all those wants to be had from Christ in this ordinance; but how to come at it thereby,

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it knows not so well nor so distinctly : A person that is confused in the general, cannot discern the Lord's Body in the sacrament ; but one that is confused in a particular, may : And tho' such an one cannot, it may be, pitch on a particular promise that suits his need, yet he may fix on Christ, and on the covenant in general, which is one of the main things that faith acts on ; and indeed, unless himself be acted on by faith, his benefits fail : And tho' a serious soul cannot get a particular promise to settle on, we say it should stick by the covenant in general, as including all particulars. 3. Consider, that discerning is not to be astricted to the very instant of receiving, but we would look well what is our aim and endeavour alongst the action ; and, if habitually we be indeed seriously seeking after and pursuing these things, we cannot have them all in our thoughts at once ; that is scarce, if at all, possible ; But if the aim and strain of your souls exercise run this way, and tho' there be failing in many things, yet this is not a neglective slighting and careless inconsideration. In a word, see if there hath been, 1. Some clear conviction of sin, and of your great need of Christ. And, 2. See if there hath been some uptaking of Christ in the ordinance, and he made precious and lovely therein in some measure ; and that it was your errand, in going to that ordinance, to take Christ to supply your need, and take away your sin, and your aim to go about the ordinance rightly in order to that end ; if the strain and series of your way in these hath been honest and sincere, ye have no reason to account yourselves (at least altogether) unworthy communicants : Tho', when we have done all that we can do, 'tis God himself who must enable us rightly to discern the Lord's Body, and who must graciously pass by many things that will be found amiss in us ; according to good king *Hezekiah* his prayer, 2 *Chron.* 30. 18, 19. *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, tho' he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary ;* So must we say, *The good Lord pardon us, tho' we discern and take not up Christ's Body with that faith and love, with that distinctness and clearness, with that delight, cheerfulness and joy that become, and are requisite for such a solemn action.*